

Kentucky Teacher

May 2010

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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on expanding teacher
competencies

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Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Theresa Simpson helps Shelby Cumpston identify a landform during a 7th-grade science class at Hancock County Middle School. Hancock County Middle is in the third year of the ASK IT (Aligning Student Knowledge through Inquiry Thinking) grant for science and mathematics. Photo by Amy Wallot



Photos by Amy Wallot

Giddyup!

Students, teachers learn about Kentucky's signature industry at festival

An estimated 5,300 students, parents and teachers enjoyed an introduction to the upcoming Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG) at the 2010 Kentucky Equine Youth Festival on March 19 at the Kentucky Horse Park's new indoor arena in Lexington.

The festival featured live demonstrations of each of the eight equine sports to be showcased at the WEG: endurance, dressage, eventing, show jumping, driving, reining, vaulting and para equestrian.

During breaks, students visited more than 30 education- and equine-related booths set up in the main concourse. They learned about many careers in the equine industry and about a variety of equine sports. Students from 28 schools attended, representing 22 districts across the state.

The University of Kentucky Equine Initiative and the University of Louisville Equine Industry Program presented the festival. The Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Kentucky Equine Education Project, United States Equestrian Federation, U.S. Pony Clubs and the Kentucky Horse Council also were contributing partners and organizers of the event.

Students from across Kentucky watch a dressage presentation during the 2010 Kentucky Equine Youth Festival at the Kentucky Horse Park. The festival provided an introduction to the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, which will be held at the Horse Park Sept. 25-Oct.10. Other demonstrations at the festival included endurance, eventing, show jumping, driving, reining, vaulting and para equestrian.



Fallsburg Elementary School (Lawrence County) 4th-grade students (pictured front to back) Tori Boggs and Winter Bowling, 6th-grade student Vista McDowell and Louisa Middle School (Lawrence County) 6th-grade student Mary Spears pet Tom after a demonstration on equine ophthalmology.

The FEI World Equestrian Games are the world championships of eight equestrian disciplines recognized by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) and are held every four years. The 2010 Alltech FEI WEG will be held in Lexington Sept. 25-Oct.10

and are expected to attract 500,000 visitors to Kentucky.

MORE INFO...

www.alltechfeigames.com

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Terry Holliday, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education

Students build on success from Advanced Placement assessment

This month, high school students will be taking Advanced Placement (AP) tests in a variety of subjects. Through the AP program's college-level courses and exams, students can earn college credit, stand out in the postsecondary admissions process and learn from skilled, dedicated and inspiring teachers.

Students in Kentucky have a unique opportunity to participate and achieve on AP tests through the AdvanceKentucky initiative. Since 2007, AdvanceKentucky's goal has been to help students reach new heights in rigorous AP academic achievement. As of the 2009-10 school year, 27 schools have been a part of this initiative, with the goal to add more each year.



Holliday

The students taking AP assessments continue to show promising results. According to AdvanceKentucky:

- The initial 12 high schools participating in the program earned 778 qualifying scores on the 2009 AP mathematics, science and English exams. This is an increase of 79 percent above the previous year's qualifying scores at the same 12 schools.
- Kentucky increased the number of AP qualifying scores earned in mathematics by 80 percent, science by 42 percent and English by 86 percent.
- Schools in the first cohort increased the number of AP exams taken by students in mathematics by 57 percent, science by 63 percent and English by 93 percent.

Students gain more than college credit for qualifying scores. In addition to getting a jumpstart on a college or university pathway, they also earn additional Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship bonuses of \$200 for a score of 3, \$250 for a score of 4 and \$300 for a score of 5. This financial support for student exam fees helps cover some of the costs, which has been a great incentive to students to sign up for AP classes and take the related exams.

One of the key components of AdvanceKentucky is making sure the teachers are prepared for the rigor of AP classes. The program targets lead teachers and master AP teachers who mentor colleagues, guide vertical teams by subject matter and conduct prep exams. Training also is provided for all AP teachers and up to six pre-AP teachers at a five-day summer institute as well as at other trainings throughout the academic year. During

vertical teaming, high school and middle school teachers collaborate four times a year on skills needed to ensure students are prepared for AP classes. Teachers in the program say it has helped them focus on AP content and created student excitement in the classroom, which allows students who continue onto postsecondary schools to get the most out of their college experience.

Last month at the Kentucky Board of Education meeting, AdvanceKentucky announced a third cohort of 16 schools that will implement the program in 2010-11 school year. This makes 44 schools that are part of the initiative. A fourth cohort is accepting applications online at www.advanceky.com until June 4. I encourage any high school in the state to take a look at joining this program. The benefits touch students – both during their high school years and following graduation – their teachers, schools and community as a whole.

Kentucky Content Leadership Networks

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is proactively instituting a new professional learning system that will develop expertise in teaching and learning around the *Core Academic Standards* for every district through the Kentucky Content Leadership Networks.

During the 2010-11 school year, KDE will offer content networks in English/language arts, mathematics and science. Each Kentucky Content Leadership Network will provide common content educators the opportunity to meet regularly – over the long term – to develop their own content and competencies, as well as the leadership skills necessary to work with other adults in their own schools and districts.

Each network will be focused on developing the understandings, abilities and leadership skills necessary to implement Kentucky's *Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning* contextualized in Kentucky's *Core Academic Standards*, which replaced Kentucky's *Program of Studies* and eliminated the *Core Content for Assessment*.

Specifically, each network will enable participants to guide the processes of leading others in their school/district to:

- break down or deconstruct standards into clear learning targets
- design high-quality formative and summative assessments
- plan rigorous and congruent learning experiences for instruction

- select evidence-based strategies and resources to enhance instruction
- support other educators in their districts as they move through these same processes

In addition, Kentucky also will offer networks for school and district administrators who will be supporting the teacher leaders in their districts. By using a district-level team composed of individuals who each attend a specific network, district leadership will ensure the expertise, coherence, common vision, skills and resources to lead everyone in their district as they implement the *Core Academic Standards*.

Race to the Top

While we are disappointed that Kentucky did not win an award in the first phase of the Race to the Top competitive grant program, our selection as a finalist, as well as the initial analysis of the scoring, shows us that Kentucky is on the right track.

In reviewing the scoring data of the 16 finalists, Kentucky's strategy of 100 percent participation from all 174 school districts did pay off. Other strengths of our application were implementation of Common Core

State Standards and assessments and student data systems.

However, there also are gaps to address. Our application's lowest scores were in the areas of teacher evaluation, addressing low-performing schools and the state's lack of charter schools.

With the maximum focus on the teacher and leader area and slight improvements in other areas, I believe we can continue to be very competitive in the second round of grants. We expect between eight and 13 states to receive funding in the second round, which will be announced in September. Kentucky will revise its application and submit it to the U.S. Department of Education by June 1.

In the meantime we continue to move forward with our vision for education reform through the ongoing efforts of the Governor's Transforming Education in Kentucky task force, as well as the implementation of Senate Bill 1. Thank you all for your support and great leadership in moving the education reform agenda forward in Kentucky.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Holliday at terry.holliday@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Visual mathematics

Fourth-grade teacher Laura Martin helps Mason Centers, left, and Miranda Baldwin with an assignment about area and perimeter during Martin's mathematics class at Silver Grove School (Silver Grove Independent). Martin said she recently completed a learning styles inventory and found that most of her students in this class were visual learners, so she incorporates more visual elements into lessons.

'Dear Teacher, Thank You'

To celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 2-8) in Kentucky and to underscore the theme "Dear Teacher, Thank You," *Kentucky Teacher* asked readers to submit thank-you messages to some of the teachers who have made public schools great for them – both as students then and as teachers now.

Thank you, Garry DeWitt

The teacher that impacted me the most was Garry DeWitt and his world civilizations class at Allen County-Scottsville High School. (He's now an assistant principal at Allen County Intermediate Center.) What made the class so interesting was his overall knowledge of the content and his enthusiasm. He would get so excited explaining ancient wars and strategies, and his enthusiasm rubbed off on the students. I remember thinking that I wanted to become a teacher and have the same impact on students as Mr. DeWitt did.

Eric Poland,
Morganfield Elementary School
(Union County)

Thank you, Dorothy Miller

Now retired, Dorothy Miller was my librarian when I was a student at White Hall Elementary School (Madison County). She had all the books that I wanted to read and let me check out as many books as I wanted. I was fascinated that there was a teaching job that involved reading and helping others find good books to read all day long, and she had an impact on my career choice (to become a library media specialist).

Janet Johnson Wells,
Rockcastle County High School

Thank you, Susan Young

I learned the true meanings of perseverance and commitment from Mrs. (Susan) Young at Westridge Elementary School in Franklin County. Through her actions and words, she modeled for me the willingness, and necessity, to go beyond the allotted workday to find solutions for children who struggle within the confines of standard curriculums. She has often spent her own resources to meet the needs of her students as individuals, with the only reward being it was in the best interest of the child. I could not be the teacher I am today without her example.

Jamie Young,
Anderson County Middle School

Thank you, Jill Phelps

I remember her being confident and caring (as a teacher). But more importantly, I remember how she took me under her wing when I began teaching. I had taught at the high school for only a few months when one of my students died in a collision. I will never forget her comforting words and how she helped me through that first day back in class. Currently, as the curriculum coordinator for Caldwell County High School, she continues to be an inspiration, and I value her insight and her spirit.

Melissa Earnest,
Caldwell County School District

Thank you, Mike Appleman and Roscoe Denney

As an educator who has been teaching for 17 years, I must give credit to my (retired) high school teachers Mike Appleman and Roscoe Denney for their effect on the person I am today. They created a learning atmosphere in the classroom that demanded knowledge, accountability and correction of mistakes to reach a higher level of success. These educators motivated me like no other person could because they made me excited about learning.

J. Bruce Blanton,
Henry County Middle School



Susan Young, a reading intervention specialist, works with 1st-grade student Austin Samples at Westridge Elementary School (Franklin County).



Photos by Amy Wallot

David Noble helps seniors (pictured left to right) Kristin Parker and Karah McDaniel and junior Morgan Page with the afternoon announcements at Woodford County High School. The students produce a live broadcast of the afternoon announcements every day.

Thank you, Dave Noble

His passion and dedication to his subjects and students made learning exciting and enjoyable. I know I am just one of many students who have passed through his classroom that have been impacted by him. He proves time and again that the children of Woodford County are in his heart. So, I thank Mr. Noble for his time, his dedication and, most of all, I thank him for his heart.

Anissa Penn Davis,
Anderson County Middle School

Thank you, Hugh Ridenour

A retired history teacher in Webster County, Hugh Ridenour brought the subject to life. His energetic lectures and intriguing questions prompted students to delve into subject matter far beyond the facts. He taught students more than content; he revealed to them the magic of learning. His passion for history was contagious, and his rigorous expectations forced students to quickly catch that fire. His footprint is certainly evident in my classroom and in my life.

Tara Higdon Howard,
McLean County High School

Thank you, Angela Rowe

When I began to teach I wanted to pattern my teaching after a lady by the name of Angela Rowe. Ms. Rowe (retired now) was a mathematics teacher in the Greenup County school district where I attended in the late 1970s. As a student, the one thing that stood out about her teaching was her desire that all of her students understood what she was teaching. She always felt the responsibility was on her to teach a topic well enough for all of her students to learn, and if they didn't, she would go back and teach it again a different way. That way of thinking has influenced my style of teaching more than any other.

Russell Foster,
Boyd County High School

Thank you, Tom Brawner

Mr. Brawner was tough as a band director at Scott County High School, and he didn't hold back on his high expectations for all of us. He pushed me in ways that I had never been pushed before, including in becoming a teacher. Mr. Brawner helped me through my years of high school and when I entered this crazy band directing world. I can't put into words how his support has helped me to remember that I always can do it.

Kristal Merz,
Mason County Middle School

ASK-IT grant answers the question

Science initiative focuses on expanding teacher competencies

By Susan Riddell

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Tabetha Cooksey said she was getting so caught up in teaching students what they should know, she forgot about teaching them what they want to know.

The ASK-IT grant has helped her focus on the latter, but still accomplish both.

"This grant has helped me to be a well-rounded educator," said Cooksey, who is in her first year teaching at Cumberland County Middle School. "It has allowed me to realize the students can enjoy what you teach if you relay the lesson in the right ways.

"Teaching and learning is a fun process, and this grant has allowed me to view the many ways I can achieve this, especially as a first-year teacher," Cooksey added. "I come home with so many new ideas that my mind explodes on the students my next day back in the classroom."

The Green River Regional Educational Cooperative manages the ASK-IT (Aligning Student Knowledge through Inquiry Thinking) science grant, which is a three-year mathematics and science initiative involving middle and elementary schools in 30 districts in western and south-central Kentucky. In all, 36 schools are participating.

The major goals of the grant are formative assessment, rigor and relevance, inquiry-based learning, and embedded, collegial teacher learning.

While Cooksey is in her first year teaching, the ASK-IT grant has been used at Cumberland County Middle for two years. It is one of 12 schools in the second year of the grant. Twelve more are in the first year with the remaining 12 schools finishing up the third and final year of the grant.

"All strategies taught through this grant are research-based with a very clear focus of the specific needs of the individual school system," said Theresa Simpson, who is in her sixth year at Hancock County Middle School. "The program review leads to an action plan that is followed through using professional development focused on increased teacher knowledge and confidence. That, in turn, leads to increased student learning and achievement.

"The grant is not a 'cookie cutter' program," Simpson added. "The ASK-IT team and community partners are dedicated to

providing school science programs with the specific tools they need to make students successful."

Simpson said first-year participants in the grant start off with an introduction to the goals of the grant, and a date for the program review is set. Gaps also are identified to deal with down the road.

Russellville Middle School (Russellville Independent) is a first-year ASK-IT grant school. Teacher Kaci Guinane said valuable resources are given for the first year of the grant.

"I have received materials and great ideas to take back to the classroom," Guinane said. "Resources like a FOSS (Full Option Science System) kit, textbooks and workbooks to go along with the kit, handouts, and a Go Motion machine have been invaluable."

Guinane said that even though she and her school are new to the ASK-IT grant, she is enjoying the benefits so far.

"It's very useful," Guinane said. "When we meet, we have discussions that help us gather ideas from other middle school science teachers," she said. "We do activities that we can take back to our classrooms and have guest speakers who come to us with a wealth of knowledge."

Cooksey said an earth history kit was a big hit in her classroom at Cumberland County Middle.

She used it to "teach my 8th-grade science class geologic time," Cooksey said. "The students really enjoyed the activities used to describe geology and how the laws of stratification were used. The students are actively engaged in lessons. My students are so excited for me to come back (from meetings) so I can demonstrate all that I have learned."

The districts participating in the ASK-IT grant are:

Third year: Adair County, Allen County, Campbellsville Independent, Elizabethtown Independent, Green County, Hancock County, Logan County, Meade County, Metcalfe County, Monroe County, Ohio County and Taylor County

Second year: Breckinridge County, Caverna Independent, Cumberland County, Daviess County, Hardin County, Hart County, Owensboro Independent, Todd County and Warren County

First year: Barren County, Bowling Green Independent, Butler County, Cloverport Independent, Edmonson County, Grayson County, Russellville Independent, Simpson County and Union County



Photo by Amy Wallot

Theresa Simpson helps 7th-grade students Becca Hurst, left, and Stephanie Wechtenhiser during science class at Hancock County Middle School. The students were modeling and writing about different land-forms. Hancock Middle is one of 36 schools participating in the ASK-IT science grant designed to provide school science programs with the specific tools they need to make students successful.

Schools in the second year of the grant participate in professional development.

"Experts are brought into the meetings to demonstrate lessons using research-based strategies," Simpson said. "They collaborate on learning target development, review of student work and assessments. There is focus on student-driven, inquiry-based learning using DOK (Depth of Knowledge) levels."

Simpson said that training and implementing formative assessments for students also are developed in the second year.

"During the second and third year, field trips are taken with content experts to various places providing many meaningful experiences that can be used in the classroom," Simpson added. "BRIMS (Behavior Representation in Modeling Simulation) is utilized often, providing wonderful experiences with other teachers, inquiry-based lessons are demonstrated, and national experts in assessment and inquiry-based strategies make presentations. The collaboration between the 12 school systems provides wonderful insight and knowledge I would have never had the opportunity to obtain without the help of this grant."

Like Cooksey, Simpson agreed that embracing the process of learning has surpassed the importance of actual results for her.

"I have become more focused on becoming a facilitator of learning, realizing that the process of searching for an answer is more important than having an answer," Simpson

said. "ASK-IT created a focus on high-quality instruction that aligns learning targets and essential questions, creates meaningful formative assessments that lead to successful summative assessments and increases achievement of all students."

Lisa Perdue taught science at Cumberland County Middle last year before accepting a position this year as the district's curriculum coach. Though she no longer uses the materials and lessons supplied by the ASK-IT grant, they have left a lasting impression on her as an educator.

"Participating in the grant was one of the best opportunities I had while teaching in the science classroom," Perdue said. "The formative assessment training was excellent. It changed my entire view of what should be happening in the classroom. I was so strongly impacted by this training, and we have made an effort in our district to get more of our staff trained and using the formative assessment. The grant reaches well outside the walls of just the 7th-grade classrooms."

MORE INFO...

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Lack of funding limits SB 1 implementation, education officials say

By Matthew Tungate

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Kentucky Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday and members of the Kentucky Board of Education called on local school district employees and parents to insist on increased funding for state education programs during their April meeting.

"They are not going to be able to find the dollars to implement what we need. They don't have money for textbooks, they don't have money for 177 (school) days, they don't have money for teachers' professional development, they don't have money for early childhood, they don't have the money," Holliday said. "But if you don't invest the money now, (then) 10 years from now, 20 years from now, we'll have even less money."

Holliday said he spent three futile weeks at the end of the General Assembly's session trying to meet with legislative leaders to express his concerns.

"It's really in the hands of local superintendents, local teachers, local school board members. It's beyond us," he said.

Legislators were unable to pass a two-year spending plan during the session. Gov. Steve Beshear has said he will call a special session and is required to call that before July 1.

"Come July 1, if we don't get a budget, we're not even certain KDE could operate," Holliday said.

However, a special session may ultimately help schools, Holliday and several board members said. School district employees need to contact their legislators and push for education funding prior to a special session, Holliday said.

Board member David Karem, a 33-year legislator, said 90,000 collective education employees could force movement among legislators. Even without additional revenue from expanded gambling – a Beshear proposal that has not been able to garner support in the legislature – legislators could do other things to help education, such as providing a mechanism for charter schools, he said.

"You look at other areas where you say, 'The number one responsibility of the state of Kentucky, in my opinion, is to provide for a system of common schools,'" Karem said.

Board member Judy Gibbons said schools have been able to move forward despite cuts in the past and the public has not seen the sacrifices they have made. She thinks that may be about to end.

"I think if we don't have a budget, we are going to see a lot of teachers that are not going to be rehired for next year," Gibbons said.

None of the proposed versions of the

state's biennial budget provides enough money to adequately fund reforms required by last year's Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), which ended the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System and required the Kentucky Department of Education to establish a new accountability system based on new standards that goes into effect in 2012, according to Holliday and department staff.

Holliday said anyone who can get 30 seconds with a Senate or House member should say:

"We're giving 6th-grade math teachers new, fewer but deeper, more rigorous standards without any training, without any support – we're just going to throw a document at them. And not only that, you don't even have the money to buy new textbooks. You have no money for materials, manipulatives, hands-on, and forget travelling or any type of (professional development). And then oh, by the way, we're going to assess you on it in 2012 but we have no money to develop these new assessments. And oh, by the way, you have to be measuring these kids formatively and diagnostically on the way, but we're not going to train you on how to do it.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have set your teachers up to fail. So please tell us what to do."

Budget proposals from the Governor's Office, House of Representatives and Senate

offer \$6.7 million or \$6.8 million of the \$9.3 million the department requested for 2011. The budgets call for \$8.5 million or \$8.6 million of the \$11 million requested the following year, according to Associate Commissioner Hiren Desai.

But the budgets only fund about \$650,000 for textbooks, while education officials estimate that new mathematics textbooks alone will cost \$7.5 million, Desai told a committee of the board. The state is rolling out new mathematics and English/language arts standards next school year, and districts will be responsible for state test results related to those new standards the following school year.

The department of education had asked for about \$21 million for textbooks, Desai said. "The impact of that on our students and our districts is that they would have to pick up the cost," he said.

State officials delayed buying textbooks this year to help make up for budget cuts imposed by the governor, he said. "This particular area is an area where the districts cannot afford to not purchase textbooks this next year," Desai said.

Deputy Commissioner Ruth Webb told the committee that school districts would likely have to cut money from safe schools programs, Extended School Services and professional development to buy the new textbooks.

Deputy Commissioner Larry Stinson said the department is working to implement SB 1 requirements, such as the new standards, but "If we do not receive specific funding within the state budget for Senate Bill 1, we're going to be seriously challenged."

For instance, department officials participated in the Unbridled Learning Summit, where they discussed unpacking the new standards to representatives of educational cooperatives, universities and school districts.

"Without sufficient funding it's going to be difficult to do that at the levels we really had intended," Stinson said. "We will do it; it's good work, it's necessary work. But we may have to scale back significantly on the number of folks that we'd like to involve in that.

"They passed a law but as yet have not provided the resources to implement that law."

Holliday had hoped to fund much of the SB 1 implementation through a \$200 million application for federal Race to the Top funding, but Kentucky was denied, and education officials have placed the blame primarily on a lack of charter schools. There is a second round of Race to the Top funding to be announced in September with an application deadline in June, but the legislature did not provide a mechanism for charter schools during its regular session.

"I can cover this for three years if we get Race to the Top (funding), but the only way I'm going to get Race to the Top is with charter school legislation," Holliday said. "The other thing is for us to refuse to do any of the work because we don't have the money. Now you tell me, being a child advocate, which one I'm going to push. I'm not going to say we're not going to do the work because we only get this generation of children once."

However, no one is sure how that will happen without increased funding.

"We're going to do the best we can with what we have because children of poverty can't wait on us to fund it," Holliday said.

The board also extended the window for state testing. Under Kentucky's spring 2010 testing plan, districts will choose among four Kentucky Core Content Test testing window options: April 19-30, April 26-May 7, May 3-14 and May 10-21. Nearly 40 percent of the state's schools lost two weeks or more this school year due to inclement weather or H1N1 flu outbreaks.

The state had to request a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education to delay the public reporting of No Child Left Behind

(See **Lack** on page 7)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Learning summit

Trigg County school district Assistant Superintendent Beth Summer, left, and Paducah Independent school district Assistant Superintendent Vickie Marley talk during a break at the Unbridled Learning Summit in Louisville. The summit provided an overview of Kentucky's Core Academic Standards and an opportunity for partner groups to discuss how best to implement the standards.

Other legislation passed in 2010 includes:

Adolescent literacy

SB 163 – encourages statewide implementation of middle and high school literacy methodologies across the curriculum and establishes KDE support and assistance to implement them.

Athletics

HB 327 – allows hiring of a nonteaching or noncertified coach; permits athletes who must compete in sanctioned competitions to be counted as in attendance at school for up to two days of competition beginning with the current school year.

Construction

SB 114 – permits school construction on land leased from another public agency for a minimum of 50 years.

SB 132 – puts into place definitions for “life-cycle cost analysis,” “net zero building” and “efficient school design;” directs KDE to put elements in place to assist in such construction for schools; directs the department to establish a consistent, measurable, objective design for facility evaluation and to issue a request for proposal for implementing a statewide evaluation on such a system.

Executive branch employees

HB 149 – caps the amount of compensatory time that non-merit state employees can be paid for when leaving their position at 240 hours; extends the probation of non-merit employees placed in merit positions from six months to 12 months; allows merit employees to run for nonpartisan offices as long as they comply with KRS 61.080 and the duties do not interfere or create conflicts of interest and the employee gives the appointing authority notice of intent to run; and grants a leave of absence.

Financial institutions, taxes and certain securities

HB 264 – authorizes a bank appointed by a local board of education to provide collateral in accordance with KRS 41.240, rather than execute a performance bond.

Government contracts

SB 175 – refines which memoranda of understanding and personal service contracts are reviewed by the Government Contract Review Committee of the Legislative Research Commission.

Hiring

HB 75 – requires that state agencies offer an interview to all finalists entitled to preference points, such as veterans, if there are fewer than five finalists and to no fewer than five if there are five or more and right to return to work to military personnel with benefits as if had stayed during the military leave.

Kentucky Board of Education

HR 114, SR 276 – confirms appointment of David Karem to the Kentucky Board of Education.

Kentucky Department of Education

SB 61 – confirms governor’s executive order reorganizing the Kentucky Department

of Education in its current configuration.

Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System

HB 540 – provides for a phase-in of a shared responsibility funding system for Kentucky Teachers Retirement System retiree health insurance with increased payment by employers, active employees and certain retirees.

HB 545 – creates a trust fund to fund retired teachers’ health insurance benefits, clarifies who is eligible for Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement and when sick leave is used in calculating retirement benefits, and revises benefits including:

- providing that in the event of marriage, the member’s spouse, not the estate by default, will be the beneficiary for receipt of any refund of the member’s account in the event of the member’s death
- providing that marriage will terminate the designation of a trust as beneficiary
- providing exception for the system to release information in response to a lawfully issued subpoena or order issued by a court of law
- changes the current minimum daily wage to \$170 per day
- deletes the provision that allows the Kentucky Department of Education to employ retirees under the critical shortage program to provide technical assistance to schools and districts required under federal law
- provides that marriage will terminate the designation of a trust as beneficiary

Low-achieving schools

HB 176 – defines “low-achieving” and sets forth intervention options; conforms to federal low-achieving models.

National Board Certified Teachers

SB 89 – provides salary supplements to certain National Board-certified teachers employed in Kentucky Career and Technical schools operated by the Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development.

Pediatric abusive head trauma

HB 285 – encourages schools to include a segment concentrating on the prevention of pediatric abusive head trauma during a student’s final year of study in high schools, including information related to the prevention and recognition of pediatric abusive head trauma; methods of calming crying infants; techniques for caregivers to use to calm themselves when confronted with an infant that is crying inconsolably; and a discussion relating to selecting responsible care providers for infant children.

Private school criminal background checks

HB 447 – permits state-certified private, parochial and church schools to require a national and state criminal background check on each certified teacher once every five years of employment after the initial check.

Reverse auctions

HB 447 – permits state-certified private, parochial and church schools to require a national and state criminal background check on each certified teacher once every five years of employment after the initial check.

Reverse auctions
SB 176 – requires the Finance and

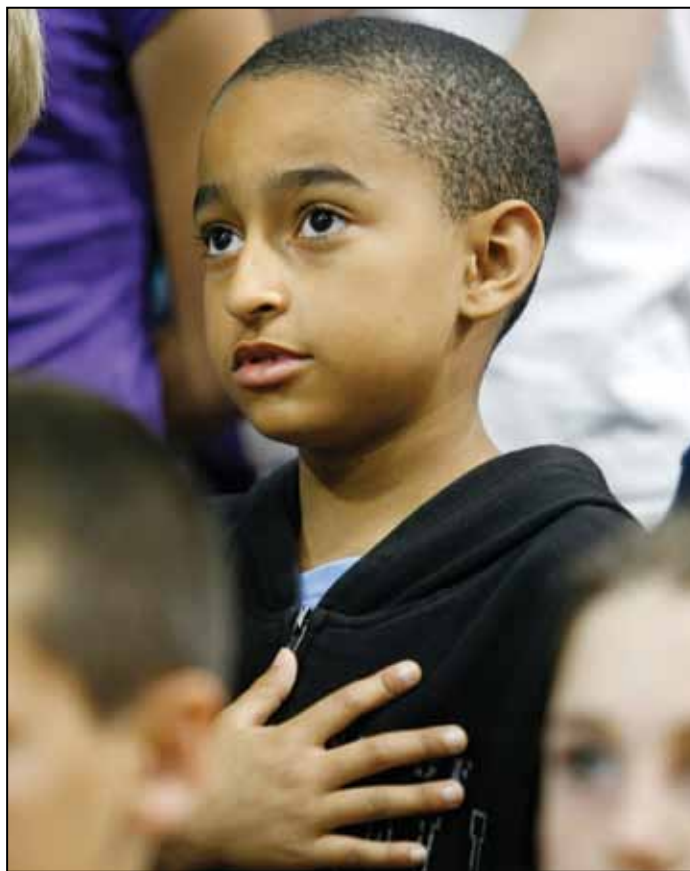


Photo by Amy Wallot

Patriotic pledge

Fifth-grade student Jalen Woodward says the Pledge of Allegiance at Chandlers Elementary School (Logan County). Chandlers Elementary was recently chosen one of seven 2010 Kentucky Schools to Watch by the Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. See page 16 for more information on the 2010 Kentucky Schools to Watch.

Administration Cabinet to adopt regulations governing use of reverse auctions – real-time, structured bidding processes taking place during a previously scheduled time and Internet location – during which multiple bidders, anonymous to each other, submit revised, lower bids to provide the solicited good or leased space but not construction projects; and allows local boards of education to use reverse auctions for purchasing.

School boundaries

SB 35 – establishes deadline for school boards to give county clerk a list of properties and boundaries, and prohibits county clerks from charging a fee to cities or school boards.

Speech-language pathologists

HB 376 – provides a salary supplement (if funded) to school district speech/language pathologists if they hold certain certifications; permits local funding of such a supplement.

State contracting practices

SB 45 – gives preference to Kentucky resident bidders in state construction contracts over nonresident bidders registered in any state that gives or requires a preference to bidders from that state equal to the preference given or required by the state of

the nonresident bidder.

Suicide prevention and awareness

HB 51 – requires Cabinet for Health and Family Services to post suicide awareness and training materials on its website and for each public middle and high school to disseminate suicide prevention awareness material to all students annually.

SB 65 – requires middle school and high school professionals to participate in two hours of self-study in suicide prevention annually.

Superintendent evaluation

SB 178 – directs that the preliminaries of a superintendent’s evaluation by a local board shall be in closed session; the summative evaluation shall be discussed and adopted in open session and reflected in the minutes; and that any written evaluation shall be available to the public on request.

Teacher certification

SB 180 – establishes a certification route for Teach for America participants in Kentucky as part of a Race to the Top grant.

MORE INFO...

www.lrc.ky.gov/record/10RS/record.htm

Lack from page 5

assessment results from Aug. 1 to the week of Sept. 20 and to waive the federally required 14-day notice to school districts of public school choice options and notice of school choice before the start of the school year. Holliday said he received a verbal waiver in early April.

In other business, the board:

- approved the state regulation that requires uniform academic course codes
 - approved joining the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the Partnership for Next Generation Learning (NxGL Partnership), and committed to supporting the P20 Innovation Labs of the University of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University
 - amended Holliday’s decision related to the lack of a nonresident student agreement between the Corbin Independent and Knox County school districts, allowing siblings of current nonresident students enrolled in Corbin Independent from Knox County to enroll as nonresidents in the 2010-11 school year
 - removed Breathitt County Board of Education member Kelly Noble
 - reappointed Natalie Bolton, director of the Office of Civic Education and Engagement in the University of Louisville’s College of Education and Human Development, and Denishia Martin, a teacher at Warren County High School, to the State Textbook Commission
 - approved district facility plans for Green, Hart and Logan County
 - approved district facility plan amendments for Clay County and Cloverport Independent
 - granted a waiver of state regulation 704 KAR 3:345 (Evaluation Guidelines) for evaluation pilot districts during the 2010-11 school year
- The Kentucky Board of Education’s next regular meeting is scheduled for June 9 and 10 in Frankfort.

MORE INFO...

<http://bit.ly/KyBoardofEd>

Bills without an emergency clause go into effect 90 days the session adjourns. Bills with an emergency clause become effective immediately.

Out with the old, in with the improved

Owsley County makes drastic changes to get students into healthier lifestyles

By Susan Riddell

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In one of the smaller counties in the state, the Owsley County school district is making big news.

That big news is coming from big changes in everything from curriculum to cafeteria food, as the district is making a direct effort to foster a healthier lifestyle for its students. These efforts then put students on a path toward getting more out of their education while attending school in the district.

Superintendent Melinda Turner, a former school nutrition program director in the district for almost 20 years, has seen a positive change in students.

"Teachers and students who feel better perform better," Turner said. "Research is clear in the benefits of fitness and proper nutrition."

"It has been simply a deliberate focus on health and wellness as opposed to the once general treatment of the issues surrounding fitness and nutrition," Turner added. "Without any additional staff or resources, we have changed the focus of physical education (PE) to one of health, fitness and wellness with the optimal utilization of our current resources."

Those changes have led to the district's recent profile in the March newsletter for the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. Last year, that organization also awarded Owsley County High School bronze medal recognition for its work to promote wellness. It was the first time a Kentucky school received such recognition from the alliance.

This year, the high school, which has students in grades 7-12, is putting extra effort into PE curriculum in hopes of earning silver medal-level status, and the district's K-6 elementary school is going for bronze.

Oneida McIntosh, Owsley County High's health education teacher, said electives added to the traditional semester of health and semester of PE at both schools have paid off.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Seventh-grade students (pictured left to right) Aimee McGraw, Darci Hollan, Alicia Gray and Devin Tirey jump rope at Owsley County High School. Twirling the rope are 7th-grade student Shana Shelton and health education teacher Oneida McIntosh. Owsley County has been recognized by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for encouraging students and teachers to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

"Middle school students now have health education that is required for a semester each for 7th and 8th grades," McIntosh said. "The same holds true for PE."

In addition, all 10th-graders are required to take health education to graduate. Health and Wellness, Special Topics in Health and Contemporary Health Issues are offered as electives, as is a cooking class that focuses on simple, healthy recipes.

Advanced PE and weightlifting classes have been added to go along with the traditional PE class required to graduate. McIntosh even sent home snow packets this winter. These packets included health and physical activities for outdoors and suggestions on cooking options.

"Students have been impacted by learning about various health topics required by the Kentucky Core Content standards," McIntosh said. "Students are engaged in regular physical activity, health practices, choices and behaviors. Students learn about nutrition, first aid, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, communicable and noncommunicable diseases, and

physical fitness."

While more classes to choose from have given students better options for learning about wellness, overhauling the food served at schools has given them a foundation in which to apply what they're learning.

Charolette Thompson, the food service coordinator for Owsley County, has been at the school for 23 years and now serves as its director.

"A wellness council developed a wellness policy that brought about great change in what our students and staff consume with regards to the food being served in the lunch room and what is sold in the vending machines within our schools," Thompson said.

According to Thompson, fish is now served at least once a week at school and all items are baked. Whole wheat breads are offered daily.

Low-fat strawberry milk was removed due to a high caloric content. All vending machines provide only diet soft drinks or bottled water.

"All items served meet the nutritional

guidelines," Thompson said. "We also offer several choices of fruits and vegetables daily."

Turner was the school nutrition program director from 1979 until 2007, when she took over as superintendent. She said the cost of fresh fruits, vegetables and nutritious entrees present a challenge, but the rewards are well worth the price.

"We've gone from a basic school meal in 1979 with limited choices to a variety of choices and self-service of fruits and vegetables every day," Turner said. "(We've gone) from receiving allocated USDA foods to selecting USDA-donated foods that fit our menu and are more nutritious; and from having a blah cafeteria in 1979 to a fun, energizing café today."

Turner also noted that since 1992, Owsley County's three schools (the district also has a preschool) have offered a universal nutrition program that provides access to a free breakfast and lunch for all students enrolled in the district regardless of income.

"Our students are faced with many challenges and to educate them in the importance to be health literate is a goal of health education," McIntosh added. "These efforts are important so that students can utilize these skills for life."

MORE INFO...

www.healthiergeneration.org

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About the Alliance for a Healthier Generation

The American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation collaborated in 2005 to create a healthier generation by tackling the issue of childhood obesity. Along with co-leader Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, the alliance strives to have a positive impact at the places that can make a difference to a child's health: homes, schools, restaurants, doctor's offices and communities. Its mission is to reduce the nationwide prevalence of childhood obesity by 2015 and to empower kids nationwide to make healthy lifestyle choices, according to its website. Visit www.healthier-generation.org for more information about the alliance.

Program looks for mathematics, science GEMS

By Matthew Tungate

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The Warren County school district and Western Kentucky University are using a \$2 million federal grant so select 5th- and 6th-graders can study pushing an orange along the ground – with their noses.

That is a good thing, according to teacher Allison Bemiss, to teach students problem-based mathematics and science. So the students looked at a wacky world record where a man pushed an orange with his nose for a mile in a little less than 23 minutes.

Students had a minute to get in groups and roll an orange with their noses, take data and plot it into a line graph. The class used that information to discuss slope and rate, she said.

"It is authentic problems ... something that is engaging to children," Bemiss said.

The exercise was one of many that will hopefully encourage academically gifted students to go into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines as part of Project GEMS (Gifted Education in Mathematics and Science). The five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education is one of seven in the country awarded under the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act.

Project GEMS research results will be used to design services and programs based on developing curriculum for identifying advanced abilities among elementary students and developing talent in children who are advanced in STEM disciplines. The ultimate goal is to replicate the successful program in the district, state and beyond, said Julia Roberts, director of the Center for Gifted Studies at Western Kentucky University.

The grant involves six schools, each with a free/reduced-price meal population of 50 percent or greater. Students in those schools have been identified for talent and interest in mathematics and science. Two of the schools serve as a control group, and students receive traditional classroom instruction.

In the other four schools, teach-

ers receive professional development to help them implement problem-based units in science and mathematics. Two of those schools also send 15 students each in 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grade to the GEMS Academy one day a week to work with Bemiss and teacher David Baxter, where they engage in problem-based mathematics and science. The curriculum is coordinated with core content and problem-based science units developed by the College of William & Mary and problem-based mathematics units from the University of Connecticut.

"We've got some more flexibility here to be able to focus on some math and science concepts that are outside their normal grade-level requirements," Baxter said.

Both Baxter and Bemiss have backgrounds that fit well with the GEMS mission. Bemiss, who taught at Briarwood Elementary School, is in her seventh year in education. Baxter, in his 15th year in education, taught at Cumberland Trace Elementary School. They left their jobs and began working on the curriculum for GEMS Academy during the spring of 2009. In August last year, they began working with the 120 students chosen to be part of the program at the Warren County Academic/Aquatics Center.

Baxter and Bemiss said they spend part of their day on mathematics and part on science, and they also give students opportunities for independent investigation.

They also have more flexibility than a traditional classroom. For instance, in the fall, a lot of students expressed an interest in anatomy and physiology.

"That's not really something they would have been able to explore in their regular classrooms, so we've actually developed that into some units that we're using across the grade levels this semester," Baxter said.

Bemiss said she and Baxter tried to choose separate curricula from what students are learning at their home school. For instance, students may be learning about data and probability at GEMS Academy but geometry at their home schools.

However, that doesn't mean



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fifth-grade student Cloie Lowe dusts a cup for fingerprints during the GEMS Academy at the Warren County Academic/Aquatics Center. Students explored fingerprinting and footprinting activities with Bowling Green Police Department crime scene investigators. Project GEMS (Gifted Education in Mathematics and Science) is designed to encourage academically gifted students to go into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

students don't put two and two together, she said. For instance, Mammoth Cave National Park employees presented to the GEMS Academy students and talked about the greenhouse effect. Bemiss said she heard a 6th-grader talk about learning about pollution in school.

"So they are making connections naturally, just as children do as learners, but we've not intentionally tried to align with their curriculum maps," she said.

But more than focus on content, GEMS Academy's focus is on thinking and knowing how to research and discussing and justifying ideas, Bemiss said. She frequently uses a quote from William Butler Yeats to characterize the program.

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.' We use that to drive everything," she said. "We don't want this to just be about filling them with facts. We want it to be more about the thinking process and igniting that curiosity within them."

Each student in the class also is exposed to technology, as there are

enough laptops for each student each day. The classes use Google tools, such as Google Survey, to send the lunch count to the Briarwood Elementary cafeteria, where the food comes from, Bemiss said.

"That may seem sort of trivial, but including those opportunities for real-world technology and getting to use them on a daily basis, that's how we want to build these children to be digital natives," she said. "They'll do things that we can't even imagine now on the computers later with their jobs."

Baxter said he and Bemiss realized early on that hands-on was important to keep the students occupied. But the key to their program is "minds on."

"The thing where we've seen maybe some of the most growth in our kids is just learning how to think about the work they've done, learning how to communicate and justify their answers to a community of their own peers – that's probably something they've had less experience with," Baxter said.

For these bright students, finding the right answer isn't always the hardest part, he said, but being

able to communicate the results and findings may be.

For students who are task-oriented, finishing 50 questions is not a problem.

"But if you reduce that down and you're going to spend your time just looking at two or three things and taking it to a level of depth and discussion that kids are really accustomed to, that's been a new experience for them," Baxter said. "And they've grown at that."

Baxter wants students to understand how to be learners and solve problems, since that's going to put them in a good position to think globally.

"It's been said that we as educators today are preparing these kids for jobs that haven't even been created yet," he said.

Bemiss added, "If we only teach them what we know, then we're putting a ceiling on their learning."

MORE INFO...

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Distinguished in giving

Moyer Elementary students learning about core content and life lessons

By Susan Riddell

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The students at Moyer Elementary School (Fort Thomas Independent) have discovered giving and learning can go hand-in-hand.

While the K-5 school of 460 students can't truly be tested for its giving prowess, the school has performed well when tested for learning.

Those test scores have added up to Moyer Elementary being named a 2009 Blue Ribbon School.

The Blue Ribbon School honor recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Blue Ribbon Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

"We look to connect our learning to authentic experiences," said Principal Jay Brewer, who is finishing his sixth year at Moyer Elementary. "Our staff creates this amazing culture of rigorous learning while balancing it with a true sense of family and compassion.

"I think the short and sweet version for us is that Moyer (Elementary) is the perfect formula of supportive parents, outstanding teachers and hard-working students," Brewer added. "These three, placed in a positive learning environment, make for a Blue Ribbon School."

No student at Moyer Elementary is too young to start learning the ins and outs of giving.

First-graders are finishing a year-long service project centered on restoring a water tower in Fort Thomas considered a landmark in the small community. They created postcards of the historic tower and sold them throughout the community.

"We began this project in September learning about the tower and what was wrong with it," said 1st-grade teacher Tracie Malone, who is in her 24th year teaching at the school. "The students definitely under-

stood the idea that the tower is a city landmark and wanted to do something to help with the restoration efforts because it was something important to our city and anyone who has ever lived here."

Each student drew a picture of the tower and some were chosen to be copied on note cards and sold. Students created an assembly line to package the cards, which was their favorite part of the process, according to Malone.

Several businesses in Fort Thomas are now selling the cards, and the students plan to end the project by presenting a play about the renovation of a gingerbread house. Proceeds from the play and note card sales will be presented to Fort Thomas Mayor Mary Brown this month.

"As a teacher, I'm hoping this will have a long-term effect on the children in that there will be a sense of civic pride as they mature," Malone said.

While the 1st-graders have been helping restore the community's water tower, other grades have been hard at work at their own service projects.

The last three years, 4th-graders have created a wax museum, and this year, those students are putting the money raised from the wax museum back into the community.

"This has definitely been one of the most rewarding projects I've ever been involved with," said Norma Lawless, who teaches 4th-grade language arts and social studies.

Lawless, who is in her fifth year at Moyer and 18th year teaching, borrowed the idea for the wax museum from a fellow teacher and tweaked it to suit her grade-level curriculum.

Students choose a famous Kentuckian – most notably a historical figure, an actor or actress, a musician, or an athlete. They each research their Kentuckian before preparing a two-minute speech that tells their historical figure's story.

"For a short period of time, the students can leave the classroom and become anything they choose – an Olympic gold med-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fourth-grade teacher Norma Lawless helps Sammie Studer with her speech on actress Rebecca Gayheart at Moyer Elementary School (Fort Thomas Independent), a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. Fourth-grade students choose a famous person with a Kentucky connection to research and write about, and then each student presents, in character, at the opening of the school's wax museum. At right is 4th-grader Drew Rom, who was writing about former University of Kentucky men's basketball coach Adolph Rupp.

alist, a president, a country music sensation or even a local celebrity such as Highlands (High School) football coach Dale Mueller or our state senator, Katie Stine," said Lawless.

"This project doesn't just satisfy the content for Kentucky history – it touches nearly every other area of our curriculum," Lawless added.

Students learn research skills through the wax museum, according to Lawless, and they write, revise and edit speeches and write poetry and feature articles. "They create PowerPoint presentations, make costumes and props for their character, paint a portrait during art class, and make an antique style frame to display their work."

The event concludes with the grand opening of the wax museum, which is for the entire community to attend.

"Like many actors, they will only perform for money," Lawless said.

In the wax museum, students pose as their historic figures with a donation cup in front of them. Passersby can drop money into the cup, bringing the wax figure to life. Students then come to life and recite their speech before reverting back to the wax figure position.

"I think this project is successful because it gives every student the opportunity to showcase his or her strengths," Lawless said. "Not all students are creative writers, but they might be able to write an incredible

feature article. Not every student is artistic, but they might love acting and design. The wax museum gives students the chance to participate in many different areas and some may even discover a hidden talent."

While Brewer and his staff feel it is important to give back to the community, that's merely one aspect of the Moyer Elementary learning experience, he said.

"A number of things stand out," he said. "We have a rigorous curriculum that challenges all students," Brewer said. "We have a strong focus on literacy, and our students exit 5th grade reading a year and a half above grade level.

"Our academic index has been more than 100 through 2006," Brewer added. "We have set in place a number of systems that meet students where they are, such as Success-Maker, Accelerated Reader, a writing continuum and a student learning profile, and our staff meets twice a year to discuss the progress of every student. Moyer (Elementary) also has an extremely committed, caring and professional staff. Although we have great programs here, it is the delivery of the instruction and the high expectations that our staff has for students that sets the tone for everyone."

MORE INFO...

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Moyer Elementary School is one of five Kentucky public schools to be named as a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. Others earning that distinction (and previously profiled in *Kentucky Teacher*) are East Heights Elementary School (Henderson County), Hager Elementary School (Ashland Independent), Paint Lick Elementary School (Garrard County) and Potter Gray Elementary School (Bowling Green Independent).

Program helps encourage Green and Healthy Schools

By Matthew Tungate

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Students at Henry Clay High School (Fayette County) have built two rain gardens to help manage excess water on the school's grounds, installed smoke detectors in four student bathrooms to decrease the likelihood of students smoking and provided each department with environmentally friendly classroom cleaners. They also have programmed all computers to go into sleep mode after school to conserve energy, maintained three carpool parking spots to reduce air pollution and improved recycling efforts to include athletic events, among numerous other eco-friendly activities.

And they've done it all since 2007, when teacher Tresine Logsdon and the student president of the Go Green Club learned about the Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools (KGHS) program. Logsdon, an 11-year teaching veteran who has taught biology and AP Environmental Science for six years at Henry Clay High, enlisted an initial group of about 80 Go Green Club and biology students and started tackling projects immediately after learning about the program.

"What I discovered very early on was that our students at Henry Clay were inherently passionate about our environment and really just needed a way to channel their abundant enthusiasm," she said. "The KGHS program does an outstanding job of guiding students, step by step, through the process."

The program, a joint effort of the Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Environmental Education Council, asks students and staff to answer a series of standards-aligned questions called inventories, assessing nine aspects of their school's environment: energy, water, solid waste, indoor air quality, green spaces, transportation, instructional leadership, hazardous chemicals, and health and safety.

"What I especially appreciate about the KGHS program, however, is that it requires students to take a close analytical look at their school campus and, based on this

analysis, develop school improvement projects that are a right fit for their community, their goals and their school environment," Logsdon said. "Instead of jumping on the bandwagon for projects that may be high-profile, easy or fun, KGHS asks students to understand the intricacies of the quality and utilization of their campus water, air, solid waste, chemical, instruction, green space and energy. From that specific data, students are asked to develop a school-improvement project."

There are 120 schools across the state in the Web-based program, and three – Henry Clay High, West Hardin Middle School (Hardin County) and Wingo Elementary School (Graves County) – were the first to achieve Kentucky Green and Healthy School status last year, meaning they have completed a project in all nine inventories.

Nakia Brown, a 6th-grade science and language arts teacher who has spent her 10-year career at Wingo Elementary, first learned about KGHS while attending a conference for the Kentucky Association of Environmental Education (KAEE). In 2008 she gathered a team of colleagues and formed the school's "Green Team."

"Together we divided the inventories and worked with our students to answer the questions and research each area. I believe that this was the key to our success," she said. "By having teamwork, we were able to share ideas, collaborate together and plan projects."

The school has started a solid-waste recycling program, created signs that hang throughout the school reminding others to turn off lights or computers when not in use and to turn off leaking water faucets, and is working on an outdoor classroom.

Brown said she has incorporated the inventories into her classroom. For instance, while teaching a unit on wetlands, she and students discussed the water inventory.

"By making the students aware of how little fresh water we actually have, they are more likely to protect and conserve it," she said.

Students throughout the school also wrote nature poetry and



Photo by Amy Wallot

Seniors Emily Estus, right, and Sarah Stevens and members of the Go Green Club at Henry Clay High School (Fayette County), paint rain barrels to be used around campus. Henry Clay High is one of 120 schools across the state that are part of the Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools program.

"green" poetry during the instructional leadership inventory. Some teachers incorporate energy conservation into their lessons on electricity in science.

KGHS Coordinator Merin Roseman said all of the inventories are aligned with current core content and will be realigned as content standards change.

For instance, mathematics and science students in one school calculated how much area they would need to build a rain garden, and language arts students wrote persuasive letters to local businesses for donations.

"We understand that teachers don't have a lot of time, so we're not going to ask them to do something on top of what they already do," Roseman said. "It's geared more toward, 'Here's a different way to do what you already do.'"

Roseman said a large part of her job is to help teachers in the KGHS program with resources, whether they need grants, collaboration

partners or lesson plans. For example, a middle school science class needed a lesson on chemical water testing. Roseman suggested using color change strip tests on water from the Kentucky River, "and that helped them answer some of the questions from the water inventory."

Roseman said the program, which is free, is set up to be flexible for teachers, whom she trains via the phone and the Web, and who can always call her for additional assistance. Teachers should not be intimidated by the nine inventories since there is no deadline for finishing projects, she said.

"A lot of schools do one a year or one every two years," Roseman said. "We have some schools that do three a year, but they don't have to, by any means."

Logsdon agreed, saying teachers should start slowly, with a core group of students working on one audit.

"Based on that data, solicit help from a few more students to help

design a school improvement project, then many more students to help implement that project," she said. "Use KGHS to capitalize on the swell of enthusiasm and excitement that is already present in your student body. Identify a few students as environmental leaders and empower them to channel their collective efforts to a common goal through an organized club."

Brown agreed and added that promoting success within the school and community is important.

"The students love to see that they have made a difference," she said.

Roseman said the program is revamping its website and giving grants to KGHS schools that do energy-saving projects this year. The program also will fund improvement projects as a reward for recruiting and mentoring new schools to the program. Members of the KAEE and certified

(See **Program** on page 16)

NAEP scores show gains

The results of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading show that Kentucky's 4th- and 8th-graders made significant gains when compared to the state's performance in previous NAEP assessments.

According to NAEP, Kentucky is one of three states that had a statistically significant increase in 4th-grade reading scores and one of nine states that had a statistically significant increase in 8th-grade reading scores. Fourth-grade scores rose from 222 in 2007 to 226 in 2009, and 8th-grade reading scores rose from 262 in 2007 to 267 in 2009. The NAEP grading scale ranges from 0 to 500.

Kentucky is the only state in the nation to report increases in both 4th- and 8th-grade reading scores. Scores for

Kentucky 4th- and 8th-graders in 2009 surpassed the national averages of 220 for 4th-graders and 262 for 8th-graders.

Students' performance on NAEP fits into one of four categories: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient or Advanced. In Kentucky, in reading, 72 percent of 4th-graders and 79 percent of 8th-graders scored at the Basic level or above.

Since 1998, Kentucky's results have remained steady, with minor gains and losses, but the 2009 results in Kentucky have significantly increased above the national average. Since 1998, Kentucky's 4th-graders have gained eight points on the NAEP reading assessment, and 8th-graders have gained five points.

MORE INFO...

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

Program encourages student biologists

Based on an aquatic theme, the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery in Jamestown offers a new endeavor known as the Biologist in Training (BiT) program. The program centers on five activities geared toward teaching students to use their observation skills while in the outdoors.

For teachers looking to incorporate the program into their classroom needs, BiT also includes supplemental curriculum binders full of additional activities that support the booklet's five main activities. These activities also serve to meet Kentucky's educational curriculum guidelines.

In addition to classroom-friendly binders, BiT also offers what are known as BiT Bins. Full of supplemental learning materials such as ID cards, nets and more, the bins are another component of BiT's overall goal to connect kids to nature.

All of the materials listed above, including BiT booklets, supplemental curriculum binders and bins are available for use through Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. There is no charge for the booklets or to use the binders and bins.

Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) was constructed in 1975, making it one of the most recently constructed hatcheries in the country. The Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Visitor/Environmental Education Center offers visitors state-of-the-art exhibits and an on-site classroom. The center serves as an engaging learning resource for all visitors, especially school children. The center also offers a variety of outreach programs and workshops for teachers and students.

MORE INFO...

www.fws.gov/wolfcreek

Kentucky Teacher available online

Every issue of *Kentucky Teacher* from Sept. 1997 to the present is available online. Visit www.education.ky.gov and click on the *Kentucky Teacher* logo to select the school year and issue. To view issues online, you need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Paper plate addition

Kindergarten teacher Sarah Howard plays an adding game with her students at Newton Parrish Elementary School (Owensboro Independent). Howard said every activity in her classroom uses a hands-on approach so students can build a concrete understanding of each concept. She added that she tries to infuse technology, such as SMART boards, as much as possible because "technology grabs their attention and keeps them interested."

'STEM Activity Packs' offer teachers digital resources, activity ideas

More teachers are turning to digital media resources to help students understand concepts, practice new skills and engage in exciting, authentic learning experiences in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). In response, PBS has introduced STEM Activity Packs for students in multiple grade levels.

Each activity pack includes a library of theme-based widgets containing links to high-quality resources and activities organized by grade level. Topics of STEM-themed activity packs include:

- Breakthroughs in Medical Research – Learn how medical pioneers who researched antibiotics, genetics and organ transplants have contributed to better treatments and some cures.
- Development and the Environment – Take a look at how population growth and development

affect the environment, and find ideas for maintaining this delicate balance.

- Earth Day – Learn that every day is Earth Day if we take care of our planet, make wise decisions about legislation and solve local environmental problems.
- Forensic Science – Discover how detective work related to DNA, human remains and fingerprints helps to identify a victim and determine the cause of death.
- How's the Weather? – Consider how global warming, our understanding of weather and natural disasters and weather prediction can help us answer this question.
- Innovation and Invention – Debate pros and cons of inventions and innovations, and research the men and women who developed the inventions.
- Oceans – Investigate the many facets of the

oceans, including marine and shore life, ecosystems, extreme weather, and early explorers.

- Technology and Ethics – Examine controversial issues brought about by technological advances in genetics, cloning, stem cell research, and reproductive medicine, and discuss the ethical issues behind the controversies.

PreK-12 teachers also can explore the STEM Education Resource Center and its database of nearly 4,000 resources.

In addition to STEM resources, PBS' website offers Activity Packs in the arts, health and fitness, reading and language arts, and social studies. Each one focuses on a curricular theme and includes links to PBS resources and supplemental activities.

MORE INFO...

www.pbs.org/teachers/activitypacks

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Thirteen Kentucky educators honored as top civic educators

Judy Rice, of Henry County High School, was recognized as the 2010 Kentucky Outstanding Civic Education Leader during the 2010 PNC Bank/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Boys Sweet 16 Basketball Tournament in March. Thirteen regional educators also were honored as finalists for the Kentucky Outstanding Civic Education Leadership Award.

The award recognizes teachers and community leaders who have made notable contributions toward promoting or implementing civic learning to prepare students to be engaged and responsible citizens.

Honorees have demonstrated outstanding leadership in and out of the classroom by promoting and strengthening civic education and by encouraging students to become active and engaged in their communities.

Rice has been a social studies educator for more than 13 years and works to make civics education come alive in the classroom. She has included the We the People and Project Citizen curricula in her classroom in addition to class textbooks, which has led her students to make actual changes in local public policy. Her students participate in community service projects throughout the community.

Outside of the classroom, Rice has been equally engaged in civics education. She has been a mentor for other teachers who are using the Project Citizen curriculum and is involved in the International Project Citizen Collaborative, where she and her class work with a Moroccan civics teacher and his class to address increasing dropout rates in both communities.

She also was part of a team of educators who designed government and civics standards-based units of study for a high school social studies course. Rice implemented the units in her classroom as part of a lesson study learning community in partnership with the Office of Civic Education and Engagement at the University of Louisville.

Other regional finalists were Barry Leonard, Graves County High School; Josh Roberts, Hancock County Middle School; Adam Webster, Logan County High School; Thad Elmore, Talton K. Stone Middle School (Elizabethtown Independent); Angela Cun-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Henry County High School teacher Judy Rice and Assistant Principal Shannon Sageser leave the floor after Rice was honored as the 2010 Kentucky Outstanding Civic Education Leader during the 2010 PNC Bank/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Boys' Sweet 16 Basketball Tournament at Rupp Arena. Rice and 12 regional educators were recognized as outstanding civics education leaders.

ningham, Bullitt Central High School (Bullitt County); Allison Hunt, duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County); Dee Besl, A.M. Yealey Elementary School (Boone County); Sally Robinson, Berea Community High School (Berea Independent); Jason Bryant, King Middle School (Mercer County); Amy Sizemore, Middlesboro Intermediate School (Middlesboro Independent); Sandra Olinger, Hazard Independent school district; and Chase Goodman, Allen Central High School (Allen County).

The Outstanding Civic Education Leader received \$500 to be used for school resources and equipment. Finalists took home a plaque recognizing their achievements.

The award was presented by members of the Civic Literacy Initiative of Kentucky (CLIK), which includes: the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Court of Justice, the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts, the Office of Civic Education and Engagement at the University of Louisville College of Education, and the Office of Secretary of State Trey Grayson.

www.civics.ky.gov

Maximizing returns on educational investments by reducing obstacles

By Michael Childress, executive director Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center

Kentucky gets some of the highest returns in the nation from its investments in elementary and secondary education when considering the obstacles our students face. The amount of academic achievement in Kentucky, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), returned for every \$1,000 in per pupil spending, or NAEP Proficiency Purchasing Power (NAEP PPP), is higher than expected given the obstacles we face to cost-effective educational spending.

Kentucky's NAEP PPP is 129 percent of predicted, ranking the state fifth nationally. Reducing these obstacles will help yield higher academic returns from future educational investments.

From 1984 to 2007, per pupil spending in Kentucky increased from about \$4,700 to \$8,600 in constant 2010 dollars. This repre-

sents an increase from 73 percent to 82 percent of the U.S. average. When adjusted for cost of living differences, Kentucky ranks 38th.

The percentage of Kentucky students scoring proficient or higher on the NAEP mathematics exams has steadily increased since 1998, but the reading percentages have been essentially flat. While Kentucky's NAEP proficiency rank is 36th, the level of NAEP proficiency returned for every \$1,000 in spending per pupil, NAEP PPP, is 21st.

Kentucky yields about 3.5 NAEP proficiency points for every \$1,000 in per pupil spending. Utah leads the nation at 5.6 points and Louisiana is last at 2.0 points.

Kentucky faces many obstacles to cost-effective educational spending.

Using factors like poverty, parental education, number of limited English proficient students, size of the rural population, obesity, students' health status, disability rates, and missed school days, Kentucky ranks fourth on the Index of Obstacles. Yet, Kentucky's NAEP Proficiency Purchasing Power is 129 percent of predicted, deriving nearly 0.8 NAEP proficiency points more than expected for every \$1,000 in per pupil spending.

Kentucky's annual rank of fifth is consistent with other studies that rank Kentucky relatively higher on educational efficiency and return on investment.

As expected, states with fewer obstacles tend to have higher NAEP Proficiency Purchasing Power. Moderating the harmful effects of poverty on learning, as well as developing healthier children, will help reduce these obstacles and facilitate even higher returns from future educational spending.

Editor's Note: The study is based on NAEP mathematics data through 2009 and reading data through 2007.

**Follow Terry Holliday
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Read Doc H's blog at

<http://kyedcommissioner.blogspot.com>

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Boyd County Middle School

Announcements

KDE arts and humanities page is updated

The Web page for arts and humanities on the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) website has been updated. The website now includes more resources of interest, links to high school graduation requirements and documents on new program reviews. To find the updates visit www.education.ky.gov, choose "Instructional Resources," then "High School" and finally "Arts and Humanities."

AP Reader positions available

Adecco is partnering with Educational Testing Service to fill positions for Advanced Placement (AP) exam readers. This year, more than 300 positions will be available. Subject areas include U.S. history, English literature and English language. All applicants must be at least 18 years old and hold a valid high school diploma or GED. The work will take place from June 2-17 in Louisville. For more information contact Traci McBurney at traci.mcburney@adeccona.com or Pamela Platt at pamela.platt@adeccona.com or call (502) 937-0028.

www.adeccousa.com

Highly Effective Teaching and Learning

KDE recently changed the name of the department's High Quality Teaching and Learning work to Highly Effective Teaching and Learning (HETL). Information for teachers, including an overview guide, and characteristics and components of HETL, can be found on KDE's website under "Instructional Resources."

www.education.ky.gov

Conferences & Workshops

'Creating Accessible Educational Materials for Students with Visual Impairments'

The workshop "Creating Accessible Educational Materials for Students with Visual Impairments," presented by Brian Goemmer, will be May 25 in Owensboro. This workshop will examine ways that technology from ViewPlus can be used to create accessible educational materials for students who are blind and visually impaired. Participants will learn how to:

- translate Microsoft Word documents to Braille documents using Tiger Software Suite
 - create a tactile map of Kentucky using mainstream technology and technology from ViewPlus
 - create a tactile chart using MS Excel and tools from ViewPlus
- To register, contact Kris Sandefur at ksandefur@wfcampus.org or call (270) 852-1488.

Toyota International Teacher Program

The 2010 Toyota International Teacher Program to the Galapagos Islands, a fully-funded professional development program for U.S. educators, is now accepting applications. Funded by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., and administered by the Institute of International Education, the program advances environmental stewardship and global connectedness in U.S. schools and communities. The program will take place Nov. 20-Dec. 4, and the deadline to apply is May 26. Full-time classroom teachers and librarians of all subjects for grades 6-12 are eligible.

www.toyota4education.com

Ending sexual assault and domestic violence

The 12th annual Ending Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Conference is calling for presenters for its event Dec. 1-3 in Lexington. Deadline for proposals is May 28. Focal points for the conference are advocacy, children, disabilities, leadership/non-profit management, prevention, prosecutions, trafficking and treatment. For more information, contact Tana E. Bentley at the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs, (502) 226-2704, ext. 300.

<http://kyasap.brinkster.net>

Forestry and entomology

This summer the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the Kentucky Division of Forestry are hosting a week-long leadership program focusing on forestry and entomology at Lake Cumberland, May 31-June 4. Contact Doug McLaren at dmclaren@uky.edu or (859) 257-2703 for more information.

www.ca.uky.edu/forestryextension

P-12 mathematics and science outreach unit

The University of Kentucky and PIMSER (Partnership Institute for Mathematics and Science Education Reform) will be hosting several workshops in mathematics and science focused on balanced assessment, dif-

ferentiation, using learning targets and conceptual learning. The workshops take place at various times during June and July. For information about programs and content, contact Kim Zeidler-Watters at kim.zeidler@uky.edu or (859) 257-4836. For registration and invoicing information, contact Jessica Dutzy at jessicadutzy@uky.edu or (859) 257-3706.

www.uky.edu/p12mathscience

TI-Nspire

This summer, teachers can bring the potential of TI-Nspire technology into their instruction. T3 – Teachers Teaching with Technology 2010 Summer Workshops offer hands-on, subject-specific TI-Nspire and TI-Nspire CAS (Computer Algebra System) training to new and experienced educators. This event will take place June 14-16 at Henry Clay High School in Lexington. Contact Bryson Perry at brysonperryjr@msn.com for more information.

www.tinspire2010.com

2010 AP Summer Institute at U of L

The University of Louisville will host its first Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) on the U of L Belknap campus June 14-18. The U of L APSI consultants have a broad range of knowledge and proven ability presenting to their peers. Several of them have received special honors, which include selection as AP exam readers, leadership awards from the College Board, and regional and national teaching awards. For more information, e-mail ap2010@louisville.edu or call (502) 852-8110.

<http://louisville.edu/admissions/visit/apsi>

Learning Disabilities Association

The LDA (Learning Disabilities Association) Summer Seminar will be June 18 in Louisville. LDA will be providing a comprehensive workshop called "Academic and Behavior Response to Intervention (RTI): Strategies and Tactics for Classroom Teachers." School systems and teams that send four or more registrants will get the discounted rate of \$50 per registrant. Deadline to register is June 10.

<https://louisville.edu/education/lda-special-ed>

2010 AP Summer Institute at WKU

Western Kentucky University will host the Advanced Placement Summer Institute June 27-July 2. Teachers can engage in stimulating

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conversation, establish a strong network of colleagues and leave eager to challenge students in the fall. There will be multiple offerings in mathematics, English, science, social studies, art and foreign languages. For more information, call (270) 745-5991.

www.wku.edu/gifted

Federation of Genealogical Societies

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) will host its annual conference Aug. 18-21 in Knoxville, Tenn. The event is co-sponsored by the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) and the East Tennessee Historical Society. The theme is "Rediscovering America's First Frontier." During the conference, speakers from across the United States will present on Kentucky and Tennessee genealogical research; researching ethnic groups, including African Americans, Native Americans and Scot-Irish; genealogical research methodology and resources; and a variety of other topics. Kent Whitworth, KHS executive director, and J. Mark Lowe, a professional genealogist, author and teacher, will speak at the conference.

www.fgs.org

Contest & Other Events

Online courses available

The University of Rhode Island is offering three online classes this summer. The classes include: Using the Internet for Teaching, Learning and Practical Applications; Using Blogs and Wikis to Foster Literacy, and Online Texts and Open Educational Resources. The deadline to apply for each course is May 21. For registration information, e-mail Kimberly Wilson at SOESpecialPrograms@gmail.com.

Journal of Media Literacy Education

The Journal of Media Literacy Education, sponsored by the National Association for Media Literacy Education, is accepting submissions for a special theme issue exploring the relationship between media literacy and digital media and learning. Those interested can submit manuscripts that explore the topic of digital media and learning in ways that connect with the practice and pedagogy of media literacy education. Work may be framed around scholarship and practice in education, media studies, cultural studies or other fields. Contributors are encouraged to query the editors in a short e-mail describing their papers to determine suitability for publication. Final date for submissions is June 1.

www.jmle.org

Consignment sale for educators

Educators are needed to take part in the Everything for Educators Consignment Sale June 16-20 at the Fern Creek Fire Department in Louisville. Participants can recycle teaching materials purchased out of pocket and no longer in use, while making money back for each item sold. The sale is free to attend and open to the public. There will be resources for preschool through 12th-grade teachers, along with home school families and preschool groups. Consignors pay an \$8 registration fee and will receive 70 percent of the sale proceeds. Volunteers are needed to work the sale, and they will be allowed to shop first. New teachers (up to five years in the profession) also will shop before the general public. For more information, call Jill Byrd at (502) 939-1437.

www.everythingforeducators.com

'Math Across Campus'

The University of Kentucky colleges of agriculture and arts and sciences, Tracy Farmer Institute for Sustainability and the Environment and the Kentucky Girls STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Collaborative, along with other sponsors, will host a program for middle school girls called Math Across Campus on June 28-30. Registration deadline is June 1. For more information, contact Carol D. Hanley at (859) 333-8248.

Fresh fruit and vegetable program

The Kentucky Department of Education is seeking elementary schools to participate in the federal Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) during the upcoming 2010-11 school year. Eligible schools are those with grades P-6 or any combination thereof. Participating schools must agree to offer free fresh fruits and vegetables to all enrolled students during the school day for a minimum of three days per week and at a time other than meal service periods. Contact Denise Hagan at denise.hagan@education.ky.gov or (502) 564-5625 for more information.

State parks Adventure Quest

Family Adventure Quests (FAQs) combine trivia questions and history with a bit of scavenger hunt challenge for teams of friends and family. Teams that track 25 quest challenges on land, on the Internet and by object are rewarded with Unbridled Spirit gift cards valued at \$85. Teams that successfully answer 20 questions receive cards worth \$50. Team results and photos are submitted to the state parks office in Frankfort for the final tally. Participants may request the FAQ booklet, which includes riddles and questions about historic and natural land-

marks, at www.parks.ky.gov or by calling, toll-free, (800) 255-PARK (7275) or (502) 564-2172. For more information, contact Chris Kellogg at chris.kellogg@ky.gov or (502) 564-8110, ext. 221.

Fulbright Scholar Program

The Fulbright Scholar Program for U.S. Faculty and Professionals for 2011-12 is accepting applications. The program offers 13 awards in teaching, research or combined teaching/research in library sciences, including a Fulbright Distinguished Chair. Faculty and professionals in library sciences also can apply for one of the 175 "All Discipline" awards open to all fields or for short-term grant opportunities through the Fulbright Specialist Program. The application deadline is Aug. 2. E-mail scholars@iie.org for more information.

www.iie.org/cies

Resources

Mad Science

Mad Science offers a large selection of after-school, preschool, summer programs, workshops, special events. All Mad Science programs are animated at your location by highly-trained professional instructors equipped with awe-inspiring gear. Contact Andrea Wright at awright@sevendcounties.org or (502) 419-3934 for more information.

www.madscience.org/kentucky

Why Files website

The mission of *The Why Files* website is to explore the science, mathematics and technology behind the news of the day, and to present those topics in a clear, accessible and accurate manner. The site is based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but *The Why Files* covers science at all institutions that engage in scientific exploration and discovery. The website provides teacher activity pages for curriculum suggestions on using 13 popular Why Files in the classroom. Teachers also can select from a list of National Science Teaching Standards for links to specific Why Files that address each standard.

<http://whyfiles.org>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Kindergarten learning

Reading and mathematics consultant Lori Chaffin works with her kindergarten students at Franklin Elementary School (Simpson County). Chaffin was using phoneme segmentation, or breaking a word into individual sounds, with the students. Chaffin said that incorporating physical movement has helped students grasp the concept of individual sounds in words.





Photo by Amy Wallot

Sound the horns

Christian County High School band director Lori Boehman leads the pep band during Christian County's 69-64 loss to Scott County High School during the 2010 PNC Bank/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Boys Sweet 16 Basketball Tournament at Rupp Arena in Lexington. Boehman has been the band director for seven years and also teaches jazz band, concert band and marching band.

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Seven schools selected as Schools to Watch Program from page 11

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform has chosen seven schools as 2010 Kentucky Schools to Watch. The schools are Adairville Middle School (Logan County), Boyd County Middle School, Chandler Elementary School (Logan County), East Oldham Middle School (Oldham County), Mount Washington Middle School (Bullitt County), North Oldham Middle School (Oldham County) and West Carter Middle School (Carter County).

"Student achievement is the focus at these schools, but at the same time they have created a very caring and safe learning environment for all students," said Fran Salyers, Kentucky Schools to Watch program director. "The Schools to Watch teams were very impressed with these schools and feel that they have much to share with other schools."

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform honored each school for its academic excellence, its responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents and for being committed to helping all students achieve at high levels. In addition, each school has strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and an organization that sustains continuous improvement and achievement.

Adairville Middle is the first Kentucky school to have the distinction of being named a Kentucky School to Watch for the third time. The school also was recognized in 2004 and 2007. Boyd County Middle and North Oldham Middle are being recognized for the second time as Kentucky Schools to Watch after first being chosen in 2007.

The Schools to Watch recognition and school improvement program, currently in 19 states, is part of an initiative developed and guided by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Schools are recognized for a three-year period; then, at the end of three years, a school must reapply. For the current three-year period, there are more than 200 schools across the United States that have been designated as Schools to Watch. Eighteen of those schools are in Kentucky.

Selection is based on a written application that requires schools to show how they meet the 37 criteria developed by the National Forum. Schools that meet the criteria are visited by a team of trained reviewers who observe classrooms; interview administrators, teachers, students and parents; and look at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons and student work.

"The Schools to Watch program has shown

that schools can meet high academic expectations while preserving a commitment to healthy development and equity for all students," said Deborah Kasak, National Forum executive director. "These schools have proven that it is possible to overcome barriers to achieving excellence, and any middle-level school in any state can truly learn from their examples."

Launched in 1999, Schools to Watch began as a national program to identify middle-grades schools across the country that were meeting or exceeding 37 criteria developed by the forum. The forum website features online tours of schools and detailed information about the selection criteria used in the recognition program. In 2002, the forum began working with states to replicate the Schools to Watch program as a way to introduce the forum's criteria for high-performance and to identify middle grades schools that meet or exceed that criteria. Kentucky joined the program in 2003.

MORE INFO ...

www.schoolstowatch.org

www.middleschoolhouse.eku.edu

Fran Salyers, fran.salyers@eku.edu,
(859) 622-1513

environmental educators also are eligible for a grant to serve as mentors for up to four schools to complete an environmental project.

"There's a lot of enthusiasm for it right now," she said. "There's a lot of enthusiasm for student-centered, place-based education, and also just the whole 'going green' type of thing."

Brown said she has seen many benefits in KGHS.

"Students have taken an active role in helping to keep our school sustainable. We have reduced our solid waste, water usage and electricity usage," she said. "Students are becoming role models to other students as well as to adults in our community. They are becoming environmental leaders and help us to plan projects around the school."

MORE INFO...

www.greenschools.ky.gov

Merin Roseman, merin.roseman@ky.gov,
(502) 564-5937

Nakia Brown, nakia.brown@graves.kyschools.us, (270) 328-4870

Tresine Logsdon, tresine.logsdon@fayette.kyschools.us, (859) 381-3423